

the fact that “all of the representatives of the tribes that met with Chairman Fowler are Democrats and have been so for years.” O’Connor wrote that he could “testify to their previous financial support to the DNC and the 1992 Clinton/Gore Campaign Committee.” In closing, O’Connor requested a meeting with Ickes as soon as possible.³⁰⁶

O’Connor followed his May 8 letter with numerous attempts over the ensuing weeks to reach Ickes in order to secure a meeting with him.³⁰⁷ O’Connor communicated with Mercer of the DNC several times over the remainder of May 1995, and even into June, about a possible

³⁰⁶The applicant tribes immediately obtained a copy of O’Connor’s letter to Ickes through a public records request made upon the City of Hudson, which had a copy of the letter on May 8 because O’Connor had apparently contemporaneously faxed the City his letter to Ickes. Three leaders of the applicant tribes drafted their own letter to Ickes dated May 11, 1995, responding point by point to O’Connor’s letter to Ickes. The response included a criticism of O’Connor’s invocation of the opponent tribes’ financial support to the DNC and the Clinton/Gore campaign:

The placement of land in tribal trust is a solemn matter and it is wrong of Mr. O’Connor to suggest that financial support to the DNC and the Clinton/Gore campaign is a relevant criterion. Certainly, the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act that allows for decisions about land being placed into trust for the economic benefit of Indian tribes does not contemplate that political contributions to any party or candidate would be relevant.

The tribal leaders further stated that they "must rely on [their] faith in the fairness of the Clinton administration, the Secretary of the Interior and the IGRA process to make decisions based on our needs without regard to partisan politics." The signatories to the letter have stated that the letter was faxed to the White House on May 11, and telephone records indicate that a facsimile was sent to the White House on that date. No copy of the letter was produced to the OIC from the White House files, and Ickes had no recollection of ever receiving it.

³⁰⁷It is not surprising that O’Connor pursued a direct meeting with Ickes. Corcoran recalls that shortly after the St. Croix hired O’Connor & Hannan on Feb. 7, O’Connor reviewed a list of White House personnel for Corcoran to see whom O’Connor could contact on behalf of the tribe. O’Connor singled out Ickes as someone with whom he had friendly relations, and offered to talk with Ickes to see if Ickes would be willing to help the St. Croix get a better hearing at Interior.